



CDSS Web Chat #5 on 7/11/19

Building Safe Dance Communities

We'll begin the web chat promptly at 8:30 EDT. Some things to keep in mind...

- Initially you'll hear CDSS staff members chatting with our guest speakers to make sure all systems are a go.
- Reminder: **mute your microphone and turn off your own webcam/video!**
- Throughout the web chat we'll be sharing slides via our CDSS screen. Zoom has a few options for video layout that might be useful, so check out this link:
<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362323-How-Do-I-Change-The-Video-Layout>.
- Having trouble with your computer audio? Dial in: +1 646-558-8656

We appreciate your patience if we encounter any tech glitches during the call!



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Building Safe Dance Communities

Web Chat Format

8:30 pm EDT Introduction: Linda Henry

8.35 Web Chat Guests:

- **Avia Moore**, CDSS Board Member from Toronto, ON, representing the CDSS Community Safety Task Group
- **Diane Silver & Robert Zieber**, Old Farmer's Ball, Asheville, NC
- **Angela DeCarlis**, Boston Intergenerational Dance Advocates (BIDA), Cambridge, MA; moving to Gainesville, FL, Gainesville Oldtime Dance Society (GODS)
- **Marcia Davis-Cannon** from Mountain View, CA, workshop leader & member of BACDS Dancer Safety Committee in San Francisco Bay area

9:15 Q & A with responses from all guests

9:40 Wrap-up: Linda

9:45 End of web chat



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Building Safe Dance Communities

First Guest (slides 3-10):

Avia Moore from Toronto, ON

CDSS Board Member, representing the CDSS Community Safety Task Group

The CDSS Safety Task Group aims to support local communities in their efforts to provide a safe environment for music, song, and dance events. We are working to provide advice and resources that will help organizers develop the policies, procedures, and supporting documents needed to understand and facilitate safety in their communities.

As CDSS, we are not prescriptive in regards to what your community 'should be doing'. As such, we are working to develop a TOOLKIT of resources. We hope that you will pull out and adapt the language and policies that work for your community.

CDSS SAFETY TOOLKIT

What is the Safety Task Group working towards?

- **Structure** – building blocks to help community organizers facilitate a safe environment
- **Clearinghouse** – Existing examples of the building blocks
- **Writing Guide** – Synthesized ideas and language options to get you started and make pulling your resources together easier

Organizers can use the toolkit to create their own local structure, choosing and adapting the elements that best serve their community.

STRUCTURE

Communities should consider having the following set of documents to facilitate safety in its many nuances:

For each of the following, the toolkit will have examples and recommendations.

STRUCTURE

Communities should consider having the following set of documents to facilitate safety in its many nuances:

- **Statement of community values.** This is where you describe the environment you are striving to create.

Your values are the justification for policies and actions that uphold them.

This is in addition to a mission and vision statements, as part of your organizing documents.

STRUCTURE

Communities should consider having the following set of documents to facilitate safety in its many nuances:

- **Statement of community values.** This is where you describe the environment you are striving to create.
- **Code of Conduct.** This document codifies behavioral expectations, specifies what behavior will not be tolerated, and outlines what the consequences will be for infractions.

*This is a policy document (not by-laws), based on **community values**.*

STRUCTURE

Communities should consider having the following set of documents to facilitate safety in its many nuances:

- **Statement of community values.** This is where you describe the environment you are striving to create.
- **Code of Conduct.** This document codifies behavioral expectations, specifies what behavior will not be tolerated, and outlines what the consequences will be for infractions.
- **Courtesy and Etiquette Literature.** Tips and guidance (preferably in DO rather than “don’t” language) that help prevent offenses from occurring.

This could be a family of pieces:

- *General tips*
- *Nuances on elitism vs. self-protection (making the dance welcoming and safe); booking ahead; when it’s ok to say no*
- *Requesting, giving, and receiving feedback to/from others*

STRUCTURE

Communities should consider having the following set of documents to facilitate safety in its many nuances:

- **Statement of Community Values.** This is where you describe the environment you are striving to create.
- **Code of Conduct.** This document codifies behavioral expectations, specifies what behavior will not be tolerated, and outlines what the consequences will be for infractions.
- **Courtesy and Etiquette Literature.** Tips and guidance (preferably in DO rather than “don’t” language) that help prevent offenses from occurring.
- **Complaint Procedures.** These outline the ways and means of handling complaints and infractions.
 - *who to complain to; who follows up; how complaints are handled; timeliness of response; confidentiality; due process; documentation; legal concerns; levels of severity; pathways for improvement and pathways for ultimate removal.*

STRUCTURE

Communities should consider having the following set of documents to facilitate safety in its many nuances:

- **Statement of Community Values.** This is where you describe the environment you are striving to create.
- **Code of Conduct.** This document codifies behavioral expectations, specifies what behavior will not be tolerated, and outlines what the consequences will be for infractions.
- **Courtesy and Etiquette Literature.** Tips and guidance (preferably in DO rather than “don’t” language) that help prevent offenses from occurring.
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Second Guests (slides 11-18):

Diane Silver & Robert Zieber
Old Farmers Ball, Asheville, NC

Diane and Robert, along with Ron Yarbrough and Charlie Meyers, made up the OFB Safety Committee that recently wrote new Complaint Response Policies and Procedures for local dances.



Diane is a long-time contra dancer, caller, clogger, and organizer. Robert is an active English and Morris dancer, and sound tech.

Resources from Diane: <http://diane-silver.com/articles-essays-etc.shtml>; email: dance@diane-silver.com

Statement of Guiding Philosophy (stems from community values)



We support victims. If a complaint is lodged against someone, we take it seriously.

We aim to be sympathetic and sincere to the complainant and to take appropriate action in a timely way.

At the same time, we recognize that many situations have conflicting perspectives of what happened. We recognize the possibility of false accusation, or an accusation based on mis-perception, and that being falsely accused is another form of victimization.

We aim to model best practices for resolving disputes in a positive and constructive manner.



Complainant's Experience

Train the board, volunteers, etc. (whoever will receive the complaint):

- How to be a good listener
- Appropriate sympathetic responses
 - Reiterate values –
 - *We support victims. We take this seriously.*
 - *So sorry this happened to you. We work hard to make this a safe space. THANK YOU for telling us!*
 - ACTION! What will happen next and when (timeframe is important) –
 - provide summary of this process and how to check on progress.
 - ASK them what resolution they are hoping for. What do they want done?
 - Follow-up – documentation procedures and hand-off to the Board or event chair.

Immediate goal: the complainant feels heard and respected, and feels assured that something will be done.

Challenge: **Great breadth of possible complaints**



minor offenses  severe safety issues

swinging too hard, personal hygiene, etc.

Dance ETIQUETTE –

Generally resolvable through education &
increased awareness

(how to give feedback – Marcia will cover that)

stalking, bullying,
harassment, threats,
actual assault, etc.
Breaking Code of Conduct
Enforceable consequences

Strategy: Define 3 levels of offense:
low, medium, high –
escalating levels of response --

*List of behaviors for each
category is in the full
document.*

See resources (last slide).

education → warnings → suspension / ban



Challenge: **Volunteers who sign up to help run the dance aren't signing up to do conflict resolution**

Strategies:

- Simple intake form - make it easy to document
- Train volunteers just on the immediate response to complainant (see above), then forward it up the “chain of command.”

Low-Level issues: Go-to volunteers trained on giving feedback at the dance, ID the accused (“woman in the blue dress”)

- short term memory – details of a minor faux pas are hard to remember 3 days later.

(Marcia will be discussing how to give feedback in a positive way).

High-Level issues: Safety committee to handle it outside the dance.

- Timeframe – not too long, but doesn't get handled AT the dance (follow-up when everyone has time to focus)
- Scope of responsibility
- Resources for skill-building (conflict resolution, mediation)



Experience of the “person-named”

- *Complaints must be specific enough to identify an offending behavior.*
- *“Person-named” individuals shall be informed of the specifics of the accusation against them, and they shall have the opportunity to respond in full.*
- *As much as possible, we aim to give warnings and opportunities to improve before being permanently banned.*
 - Low level – education, awareness – **pattern of repeated offense** required before being suspended
 - Good documentation of multiple warnings
 - High level – immediate suspension possible; opportunities for reinstatement based on review of all perspectives or resolution of conflict.
- Appeal process – if new information becomes available, or the “person named” took steps to rectify the offense.
(still a work in progress)

Challenge: Issues that occur outside the dance



Relationship gone bad; disgruntled ex; (feels victimized); “he’s a predator, he should be banned.” Threats of boycotting.

- What’s our jurisdiction?
- What’s the scope of our responsibility?

Stems from high level complaints

Strategy: Created a clear policy:

The OFB Board is not a forum to resolve personal disputes that occur outside of dance events except in situations where the dispute directly impacts an OFB event. If deemed appropriate for involvement, Board response is for the purpose of protecting participants at future OFB events from potential harm. The OFB does not impose consequences for the purpose of personal redress.

Resources



<https://oldfarmersball.com/safety/>

Literature re: behavior expectations:

- [Dance Guidelines](#)
- [Policy and Etiquette Brochure 1](#)
- [Policy and Etiquette Brochure 2](#)

Our policies and procedures for responding to concerns are public and transparent:

- [Complaint Policies and Procedures – Summary](#)
- [Full-handbook](#)



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Third Guest (slides 19-23):

Angela DeCarlis, Somerville, MA

Boston Intergenerational Dance Advocates (BIDA) in Cambridge, MA → Gainesville, FL (Gainesville Oldtime Dance Society – GODS)

Angela is a caller and facilitator of contra dances. They learned to dance in Gainesville, FL and have since been a board member for the PATMaD (Philadelphia Area) and BIDA dances. Two years ago, they helped to found BIDA's Safety Team.

www.angeladecarlis.com



BIDA (Boston Intergenerational Dance Advocates)

- www.BIDAdance.org/Safety-at-BIDA
- blog.BIDAdance.org

Facets of Safety at BIDA:

- **Core Safety Team**
 - Minimum 3-4 members. Some members are also BIDA Board members
 - Responsible for gathering information, deliberating, and creating solutions wherever possible.
- **Safety Representatives**
 - Fillable volunteer positions, 2 per every dance
 - Trained to listen, record information, and resolve smaller disputes

Creating Safer Dance Culture

What makes a community feel safe for everyone?

- **Online Spaces as a Continuation of Dance Spaces**
 - Dancers who engage in online harassment, verbal abuse via chat, cyberstalking, or who use aggressive or violent language on social media aren't often confronted by their dance organizers
- **Being welcoming to Individuals of Diversity**
 - Notice community members who change their behavior based on others' identities
 - Dancers who refuse to dance with _____ people do not contribute a Safe Culture
 - Set a precedent for Safety
 - Regular announcements on your dance's Safety Resources, including new dancers, etc

Creating Safer Dance Culture

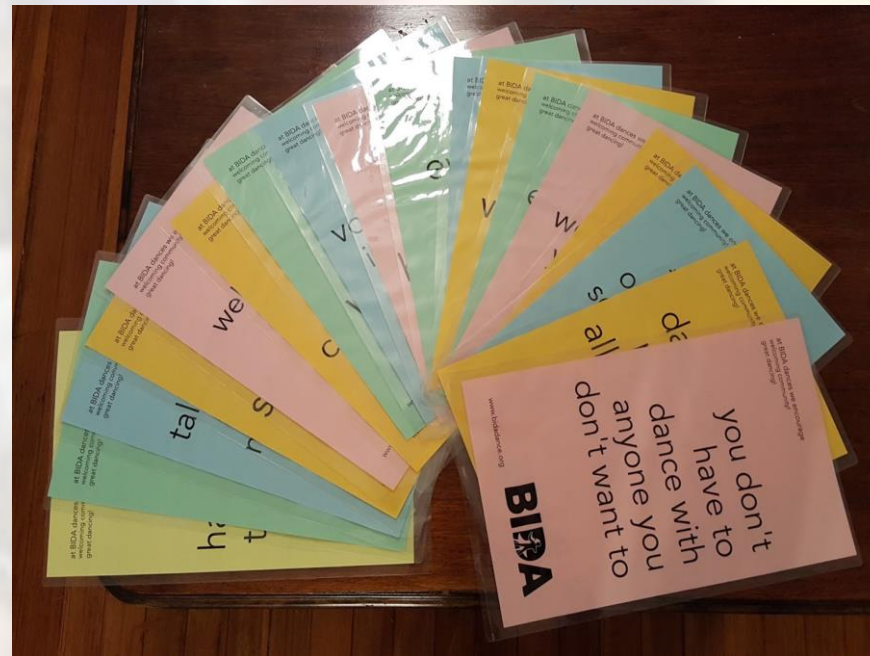
What makes a community feel safe for everyone?

- **Genderfree Dancing = Safer Dancing**
 - More welcoming to LGBTQIA+ and Gender Nonconforming dancers
 - In a community where “All Are Welcome”, create an environment which respects everyone’s identity
 - Safer for EVERYONE:
 - Fewer assumptions made, more explicit communication encouraged
 - Dancers handle mistakes more kindly and with more grace
 - Dancers who learn to dance both roles are more informed and can pass on more skills to more people
 - Fewer instances of unsafe dancing
 - Increased ability for dancers to protect themselves from unwanted interactions

More Welcoming Is More Safe!

Create Messaging within your Community to promote your dance as a safe space for **all**.

- Resources for New Dancers
- Opportunities for Organizers to be identified / approached
- Setting of Community Norms
- Recognizing and Listening to the perspectives of historically disenfranchised demographics: Women, BIPOC, LGBTQ+



Images courtesy of BIDA (Boston, MA)
and PICD (Portland, ME)



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Building Safe Dance Communities

Fourth Guest (slides 24-30):

Marcia Davis-Cannon, Mountain View, CA

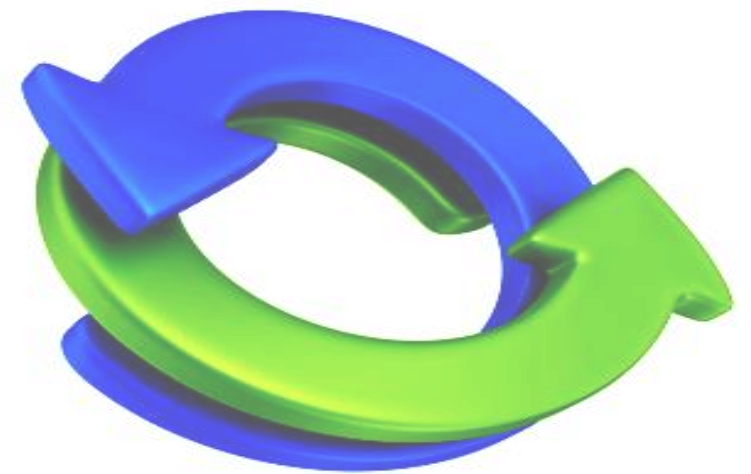
Marcia is a member of the Dancer Safety Committee for BACDS in the San Francisco Bay area, and also a trainer, coach and long-time people manager.

When a dance manager expressed concern about communicating with someone who had violated the code of conduct after an initial warning, Marcia offered to lead the conversation. She has since led many such conversations, and put together a training for dance managers on giving feedback in a way that it can be heard.

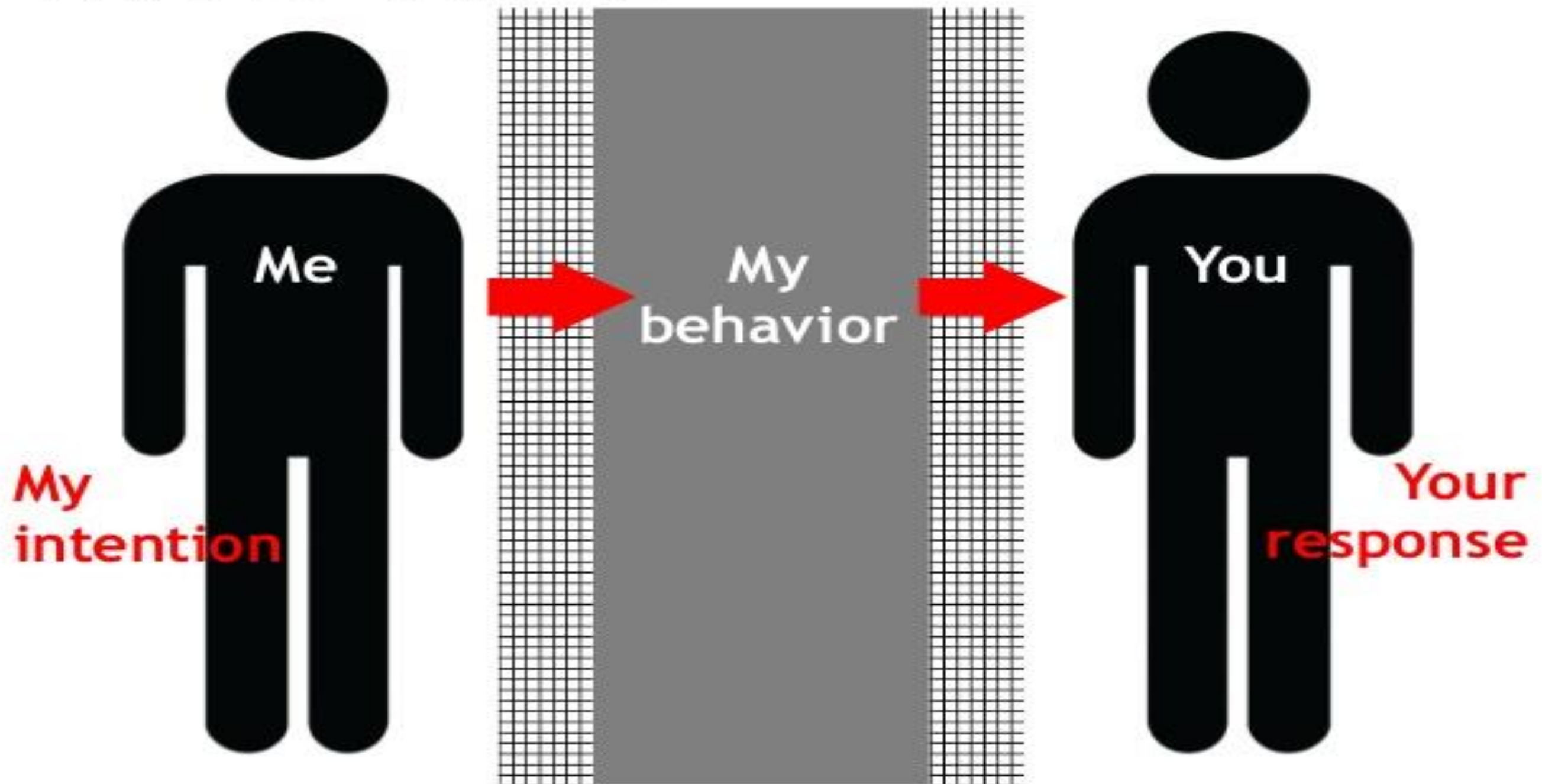


Definition of Feedback

Information sent about the impact of prior behavior so that future behavior may be adjusted to achieve desired results.



The net

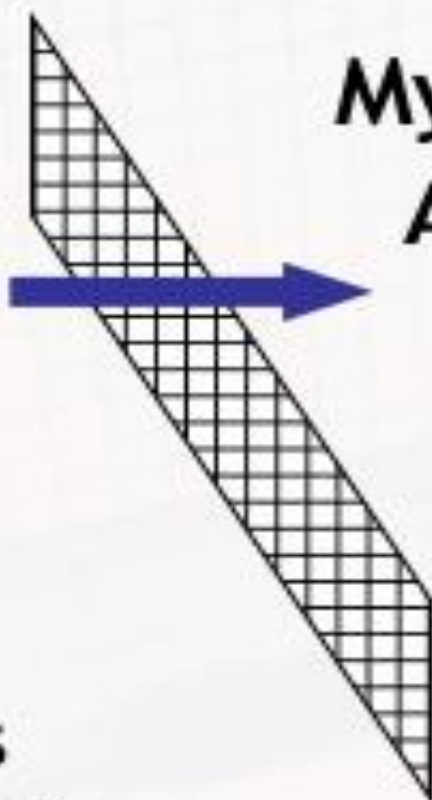


The net

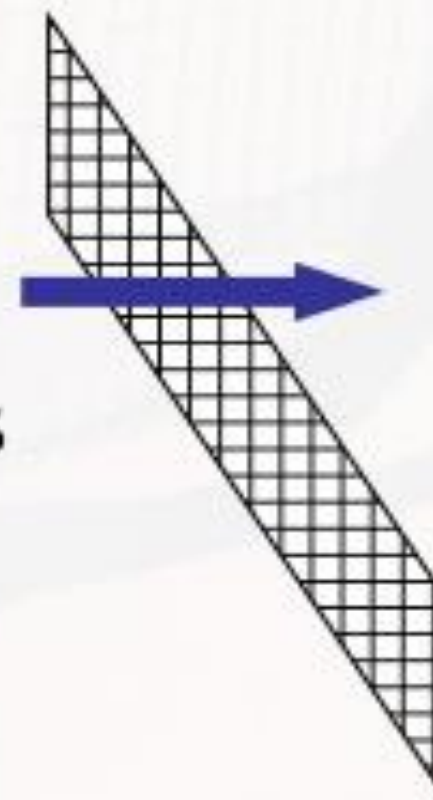
Me and my...



**Needs
Motives
Intentions**



My behavior...
Actions
Statements
Non-Verbals



You and your...



**Feelings
Reactions
Responses**



Feeling

Safe



Feedback welcome

Useful Articles

- **Carole Robin: Feedback is a Gift--Seven tips for giving feedback to others**
<https://www.gsb.stanford.edu/insights/carole-robin-feedback-gift>
- **Carole Robin: How to Create a Feedback-Rich Environment**
<https://www.gsb.stanford.edu/insights/carole-robin-how-create-feedback-rich-environment>
- **Is it past time you engaged in a “Courageous Conversation?”**
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/margiewarrell/2012/11/13/courageous-conversation/>
- **4 Things to Do Before a Tough Conversation**
https://hbr.org/2019/01/4-things-to-do-before-a-tough-conversation?utm_campaign=hbr&utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=social
- **5 Tips On Handling A Drunk In The Workplace**
<https://www.businessknowhow.com/manage/drunk.htm>
- **How to Tell Employees Not to Wear Excessive Perfume**
<https://smallbusiness.chron.com/tell-employees-not-wear-excessive-perfume-17615.html>
- **Tips For How To Help A Person With Mental Illness**
<https://www.nami.org/Get-Involved/NAMI-FaithNet/Tips-For-How-to-Help-a-Person-with-Mental-Illness>



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Q & A - How to Send a Question

If you have a question for our guests, open the chat bar by clicking “Chat” in the meeting controls at the bottom of your screen.

Type in your name and a brief question.

NOTE: During the Q&A everyone except the guests will continue to be muted.

➤ **Please keep do not share your webcam.**



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More resources available through CDSS:

- **Organizers Resource Portal:** cdss.org/resources/how-to/organizers
- **Web Chat Series** (recordings posted in Portal)
- **Community Outreach Grants** (next deadline Oct 1st)
- **Quarterly Shop Talk** e-blasts for organizers (join via tab in Portal home page)
- **Quarterly e-blasts for CDSS Affiliates** (join via CDSS website: cdss.org)
- **CDSS News** articles (*Taking Someone Aside* article in Summer CDSS News)
- **CDSS Dance, Music, & Song Camps:** cdss.org/camp *scholarships still available!*



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Building Safe Dance Communities

Wrap Up

- **Survey:** Your valuable feedback will help us continue to improve this web chat series. Please reply to the survey you'll receive via email tomorrow.
- **Recording:** We'll also send you a link to this web chat recording and other safety-related resources that will be posted on the CDSS website soon.
- Have **questions** that weren't answered during this web chat? Continue these conversations via Shared Weight, an online forum for organizers to exchange ideas on a wide range of topics. www.sharedweight.net
- **Next Web Chat: Connecting Community Sing Organizers**, date TBA (2nd wk in Oct)
- **Keep in touch!** Send questions and comments to Linda Henry at linda@cdss.org